

# What Does It Really Mean to Be an Apostle Under the New Covenant?

Have you ever wondered what the word “apostle” meant to those living in the time the New Covenant was written? I believe that understanding the original meaning and use of the word “apostle” will help bring clarity to the role of apostles today. Here are some things I have discovered:

Before the New Covenant was written, Phoenicians and Greeks first developed and used the word “apostle,” and later the Roman Empire adopted the word and developed its meaning and function further. Apostle, in its most simplistic form, means a sent one. But when we dig deeper and ask who was the sender, for what purpose was the messenger sent and what was the message he carried, we discover layers of profound meaning and truth that point to the kingdom of God.

## **Mission Possible**

Two thousand years ago, apostle was not a religious word or title, but was used in secular language to describe a king sending out a fleet of battle ships (but not limited to ships) on a specific mission. Their mission was to sail to foreign territory for the purpose of colonizing that new territory, and transforming it to be just like the territory they had been sent out from. The head captain on the lead ship was called an apostle.

Alongside the apostle traveled a team of skilled tradesmen, for example: teachers of language and culture, architects and builders, soldiers to fight and maintain order, doctors and many other foundational occupations for the success and expansion of the new colony. The apostle was sent with exclusive authority from the king to oversee and direct the

development of the new colony. The apostle's end goal was to make sure that if the king ever visited that new colony, he would immediately feel as though he had never left his capital city. The way of life, culture, language, architecture, education and so on, was supposed to be just like it was in Rome.

## **Huge Statement**

I have put a positive light on the role of a Roman apostle from 2000 years ago, but in reality, their colonial mission was full of bloodshed, corruption and abuse of power. Despite this, when Jesus gave power and authority to his disciples and called them apostles, in the language and context of that day this was a *huge* statement.

In part 2, I will share some spiritual principals we can take from understanding the original meaning of "apostle" and highlight the clear connection to fivefold ministry (Eph. 4:11). {eoa}

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